



College info session

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Degrees are different?

- High School:
 - *Diploma*: 4 years
- College or “Undergraduate”
 - *Associate’s Degree*: 2 years
 - Typically from Community College
 - *Bachelor’s Degree*: 4 years
 - BA = Bachelor of Arts
 - English, Philosophy, Political Science, History, Foreign language, Film, Economics, Anthropology, Sociology...
 - BS = Bachelor of Science
 - Math, Chemistry, Physics, Biology, Computer Science, Engineering, Geology...

Graduate School

- Graduate School
 - Master’s Degree: 1-3 years
 - Master of Arts: M.A.
 - Master of Science: M.S.
 - Ph.D. (Doctor of Philosophy): 4-7 years
 - You do not necessarily need a MA or MS first
 - In the fields of science and engineering, your tuition and living wage should be paid by an advisor from the university.

Professional School

- After college, you can go to “Professional School” instead of “Graduate School”:
 - Law school: 3 years
 - Pharmacy: 3 years
 - usually you need to choose this major at the beginning of college
 - Medical School: 4 years plus residency
 - You can have any major in college, but you need to take required science classes. These can be your “electives”. I knew a girl who majored in art and then went to medical school. It was hard, but she was very dedicated.
 - Dental School: 4 years
 - Veterinary School: 4 - 5 years
 - Business (M.BA): 2 years

How can I ever pay for this?!?

- **Loans (DO need to be paid back)**
 - Subsidized: no interest accrues until after you graduate (or stop attending school)
 - Unsubsidized: interest starts accruing immediately
- **Scholarships (do not need to be paid back)**
 - Merit-based, Need-based, or Athletic
 - Local, state and federal
- **Grants (do not need to be paid back)**
 - Merit-based before *and during* college!
 - Usually your specific college within the university has money that they can give to the top students
 - Local, state, and national!

Will that be enough?

- **FAFSA: Free Application for Federal Student Aid**
 - You need to fill out the FAFSA form to be considered for LOANS & SCHOLARSHIPS!
 - <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/>
- **AT GWHS: UPCOMING FAFSA COMPLETIONS WORKSHOPS IN OUR IMC (Library): Pre-register in room 108.**
 - **Monday, January 10** 3rd period lunch & 6th period lunch
 - **Tuesday, January 11** 4th period lunch
 - **Wednesday, January 12** 5th period lunch
- **Work-study**
 - This is where you work for the university for 10 hours/ week to earn additional scholarship \$.
- **The bottom line:** work hard in college to get good grades (A's and B's), ask your advisor about grant and scholarship opportunities, and apply for grants and scholarships!

Choosing a school...

- Research online (look at the majors they offer and % of students who graduate), make a short list of schools, THEN VISIT THEM!
 - <http://collegesearch.collegeboard.com/search/index.jsp>
 - <http://www.princetonreview.com/>
- Search engine: Shazamm!
 - <http://www.collegeview.com/collegesearch/index.jsp>
- Your choice of a college really depends upon what you and your family decide is a good fit *for you*. There is not “one right answer.” There is a TON of information online.
- Rankings:
 - <http://colleges.usnews.rankingsandreviews.com/college>

Choosing your major

- This will be your focus (ex: Chemistry major) and you “declare” it to your academic advisor.
 - To do auto design, you would major in engineering.
- You can usually pick your major during your 2nd year of college, after you’ve taken the “general education requirements” during your first year.
 - BUT...it is difficult to switch into a science or math major if you didn’t take science AND math your first two semesters. You can do it, but you may not graduate within 4 years (4.5 to 5 years).
- Choose whatever you want – but be practical. Know what you’re getting into in terms of jobs: <http://www.bls.gov/OCO/>

Daily Schedule

- Usually you take 4 to 5 classes per semester, but they do not meet every day. On a given day you could have 0 to 3 classes. They are usually:
 - 1 hour three times per week
 - 1.5 hours twice per week
 - 3 hours once per week
- For every ONE hour of class time, you will have about THREE hours of homework.
 - Normally 15 hours of class time → 45 hours of homework. This means 5-6 hours of homework per day would be *normal*.
- So...you must use your “free time” to read, study, prepare, think, AND THEN go out with friends.
- Get 8 hours of sleep per night; plan ahead so you don’t exhaust yourself. I only pulled one “all nighter” during all of college.

Can I succeed?

- **TIME MANAGEMENT IS KEY!**
 - There were weeks when I planned for every 15 minutes of my time. I needed all the time possible to do quality work. My social life had to wait.
- **My mom’s pearls of wisdom (and she was right!):**
 - Don’t get behind
 - Don’t skip class
 - Don’t give up! ☺
- **Ask for help from professors and teaching assistants early and often – it is their JOB to help you, so don’t feel ashamed!**

Where should I live?

- I lived in the dorms and then a campus apartment. I loved the dining hall at Penn State (unlimited ice cream!).
- Some of my friends lived at home and drove to college every day. That can work very well.
- Make sure you understand that everyone is busy, even if at any given moment *someone* is always taking a break. Don’t be fooled and think it’s easy for everyone else – sometimes people show off!

Social life

- Yes, college is FUN! You will learn about things more deeply and see the world in new ways. You will be surrounded by people and friends who are working as hard as you are – you are not alone!
- There are *so many things to be fascinated with*, and so much culture and knowledge is at your fingertips in college!
- There are a lot of (free) events hosted by the college.
- If you live in a dormitory, your roommate may become your best friend. Also, you will meet people during the first week at “orientation” who remain life-long friends.
- Find a club or intramural sport that you like and make friends with similar interests. This way, you will be working on a project and also hanging out with your friends.

Balancing it all...

- Sports and college...social life and college...
- You will have to **make choices and learn to prioritize**. It is certainly possible to be an athlete and scholar, but you have to be dedicated and true to yourself.
- Plan on getting your work finished first, and then going out with friends (one or two evenings per week).
 - Personally, I enjoyed going to the dining commons for lunch with my friends. This gave me a break during the middle of the day, it was fun to socialize between classes.
- **TIME MANAGEMENT!** Organize your time and prioritize the things that need more attention and plan ahead. Be your own boss!

Staying Focused

- “Is there a point where I would feel like I want to drop out?”
 - Maybe. There were times when I felt depressed or overwhelmed. But I knew I was lucky to be in college and took that privilege seriously. I immersed myself in my work and became inspired again. Be patient with yourself, even if you feel like you want to quit. These are the times to **ask for help**. *The school wants you to succeed and has a lot of help to offer you!*
 - You can **feel proud of your work** because you have to struggle through it. If it was easy, what could you be proud of?

Other questions...

- If you have bad grades, can you still go to a good college?
 - Apply!
 - Sometimes people go to community college the first two years, prove themselves by working REALLY HARD, and earning excellent grades, and then transfer to a very good four-year college after that.
 - How to transfer? You apply as a “transfer student” to the new schools. People do this all the time and the academic advisor/online directions can tell you the details.

Remember:

- **Don't skip class,**
- **Don't get behind,**
- **Don't give up!** 😊

Best of luck in all you do!